

**Hawaii State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (HSCADV)  
and  
Department of Human Services /Child Welfare Services Branch (DHS/CWSB)**

Improving Outcomes for Children and Families Affected by Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment  
December 2004

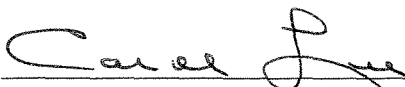
DV Providers & CWS Staff:

In April 2002, Carol Lee (Executive Director, HSCADV), Amy Tsark (DHS/CWSB Administrator), and the Honorable R. Mark Browning (Family Court) attended a Regional Leadership Forum on improving outcomes for children and families affected by domestic violence and child maltreatment. At the Forum, we agreed to work on the following goals: 1) statewide collaboration; 2) formalize relationships for consistency and continuity; 3) develop joint protocols and policies; 4) protect families' safety; and 5) involve community/diverse representation.

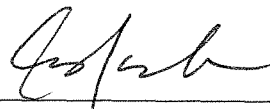
A "Domestic Violence/Child Welfare Services" (DV/CWS) Planning Committee was formed through the leadership of the Honorable Browning. Initially, the Planning Committee was represented by Ms. Lee, Ms. Tsark, Ms. Maureen Kiehm (Program Specialist from the Judiciary, First Circuit), and Judge Browning. A facilitated meeting between DV Providers and CWS Staff was held on June 23, 2003 to identify common concerns and develop solutions. Following the meeting, the Planning Committee's membership was expanded to include line representation -- Cindy Cline, Angela Doi, Kata Issari, and Jennifer Rose from DV Providers and Dana Kano and Patricia Oshiro from CWS Staff. The purpose of the Committee is to develop a framework for the work of the committee that supports and encourages candid discussions of difficult issues common to DV/CWS, assist/facilitate them in making decisions or recommendations, and to develop and prioritize the tasks for the year.

The expanded Planning Committee continues to meet in 2003 and 2004 through the leadership, guidance, and support from Ms. Elizabeth Kent, Executive Director of the Center for Alternative Dispute Resolution (CFADR) and her staff. Through this effort, the Committee developed a joint statement concerning domestic violence and child abuse and a protocol to address disagreements between DV Providers and CWS Staff (see enclosure), which we are sharing with our staff.

In the upcoming year, the Planning Committee will embark on a training collaboration in our continuing effort to improve communication and case coordination. It is our hope that our respective staff will continue to be open as much as possible, to listen to each other's concerns, and to build understanding and trust. We want to give a special recognition to Judge Browning, whose unwavering vision and commitment has been a sustaining and guiding force. We also want to thank Ms. Kent and her staff for their continued assistance and support.



Carol Lee, Executive Director  
HSCADV



Amy Tsark, Administrator  
DHS/CWSB

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Joint Statement Concerning Domestic Violence and Child Abuse

HSCADV and DHS/CWSB agree that, in general, children belong with their non-abusive parent and, whenever possible, safety planning should be conducted for the child and the non-abusive parent.

Hawaii's law is clear that domestic violence is not just one of many considerations in determining the best interests of the child; it is a primary factor, as is the safety of the child and the parent who is the victim of family violence.

HSCADV and DHS/CWSB recognize that chapter 587 and section 571-46(9) of the Hawaii Revised Statutes recognize that domestic violence is an important consideration in determining the best interests of the child.

Protocol to Address Disagreements

Child Welfare Services Staff and Domestic Violence Service Providers are committed to the safety, protection, and well being of our mutual clients. Our working relationship therefore must be built on openness, respect, trust, and acknowledgement of each other's knowledge and intentions in order to achieve the best outcomes for our clients. It is with this intent that protocols to resolve case issues are being implemented.

When a disagreement occurs between a CWS worker and an advocate against domestic violence, the workers should discuss their concerns with each other by telephone or in person.

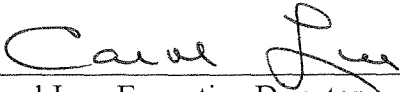
If the workers cannot resolve the disagreement, they should discuss their concerns with their respective supervisors. As a courtesy, they should inform their counterparts before doing so.

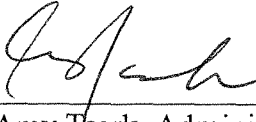
If the disagreement must be addressed at a higher level, the supervisors should discuss their concerns with each other by telephone or in person.

If concerns exist about the safety of a child or an abused parent, either supervisor may bring the concerns to the attention of her administrator. The administrator may then contact her counterpart to discuss the concerns or request a meeting.

Workers should respond within two business days to contacts from their counterparts. Disagreements should be resolved within one week; however, resolution should be expedited if safety concerns exist, or if a hearing is scheduled in less than one week.

For safety reasons, as well as to comply with the internal rules of some organizations, e-mail communications should not include clients' names, identifying information, or substantive case information.

  
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Carol Lee, Executive Director  
HSCADV

  
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Amy Tsark, Administrator  
DHS/CWSB